



A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM MANORBIER, PEMBROKESHIRE

(Treasure Case 10.12)

March 2011

Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Cadw



ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol
DYFED
archaeological trust

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2011-17
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 100611

Mawrth 2011
March 2011

**A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM MANORBIER,
PEMBROKESHIRE**
(Treasure Case 10.12)

Gan / By

Adam Gwilt, Mark Lodwick and Duncan Schlee

Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys

The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandello, Sir
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133
E-bost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Gwefan: www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandello,
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Fax: 01558 823133
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Website: www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Cwmni cyfyngedig (1198990) ynghyd ag elusen gofrestredig (504616) yw'r Ymddiriedolaeth. The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)

CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: C R MUSSON MBE B Arch FSA MIFA. CYFARWYDDWR
DIRECTOR: K MURPHY BA MIFA

**A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM MANORBIER, PEMBROKESHIRE
(Treasure Case 10.12)**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE SITE	1
Location and Topography	1
Archaeological Background	1
THE HOARD	3
Account of Discovery	3
FIELD SURVEY	5
Test Pit 1	5
Test Pit 2	5
Results of the Test Pits	5
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	6
Geophysical survey results	6
CONCLUSIONS	9
 FIGURES	
Figure 1: Location map of Manorbier based on Ordnance Survey	2
Figure 2: Geophysical Survey plot overlain with possible locations of find sites and test pit locations	7
Figure 3: Annotated interpretation of the geophysical survey results	8

A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM MANORBIER, PEMBROKESHIRE (Treasure Case 10.12)

INTRODUCTION

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services was commissioned by Cadw to undertake a brief field survey. The purpose of the work was to provide sufficient information about the circumstances of the discovery of a Late Bronze Age hoard from near Manorbier to inform the coroner's report on the discovery, to establish its archaeological context, and to identify the need or otherwise for additional archaeological fieldwork.

THE SITE

Location and Topography

The site of the hoard discovery is located in the northeast corner of a field close to a farm located close to the 'Ridgeway', a prehistoric route running along the top of a natural ridge of land between Tenby and Pembroke. The exact location of the hoard site is purposefully omitted from this report although all finds, archaeological records and the geophysical survey have been tied in to the national Ordnance Survey grid.

To the south of the Ridgeway on the south facing slopes, is a pattern of long, thin field boundaries on a north south alignment. This field system may have prehistoric origins, but has subject to continued use and modification since that time, most notably in the medieval period. The area with the best preserved field boundaries is included in the register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales.

Archaeological Background

Although hoards are often found in isolated locations and not associated with settlement or other site types, the location of this discovery is close to 'the Ridgeway'. This is a prehistoric route, in the vicinity of which, several Bronze Age burial mounds and flint working sites are known to exist. Evidence of a co-axial field system in this area could also have Late Bronze Age origins, but this has been modified and overlain by later field systems. It was therefore considered important to try and establish whether the hoard was indeed an isolated feature, or was part of a more complex site such as a burial mound, that might merit further archaeological investigation.

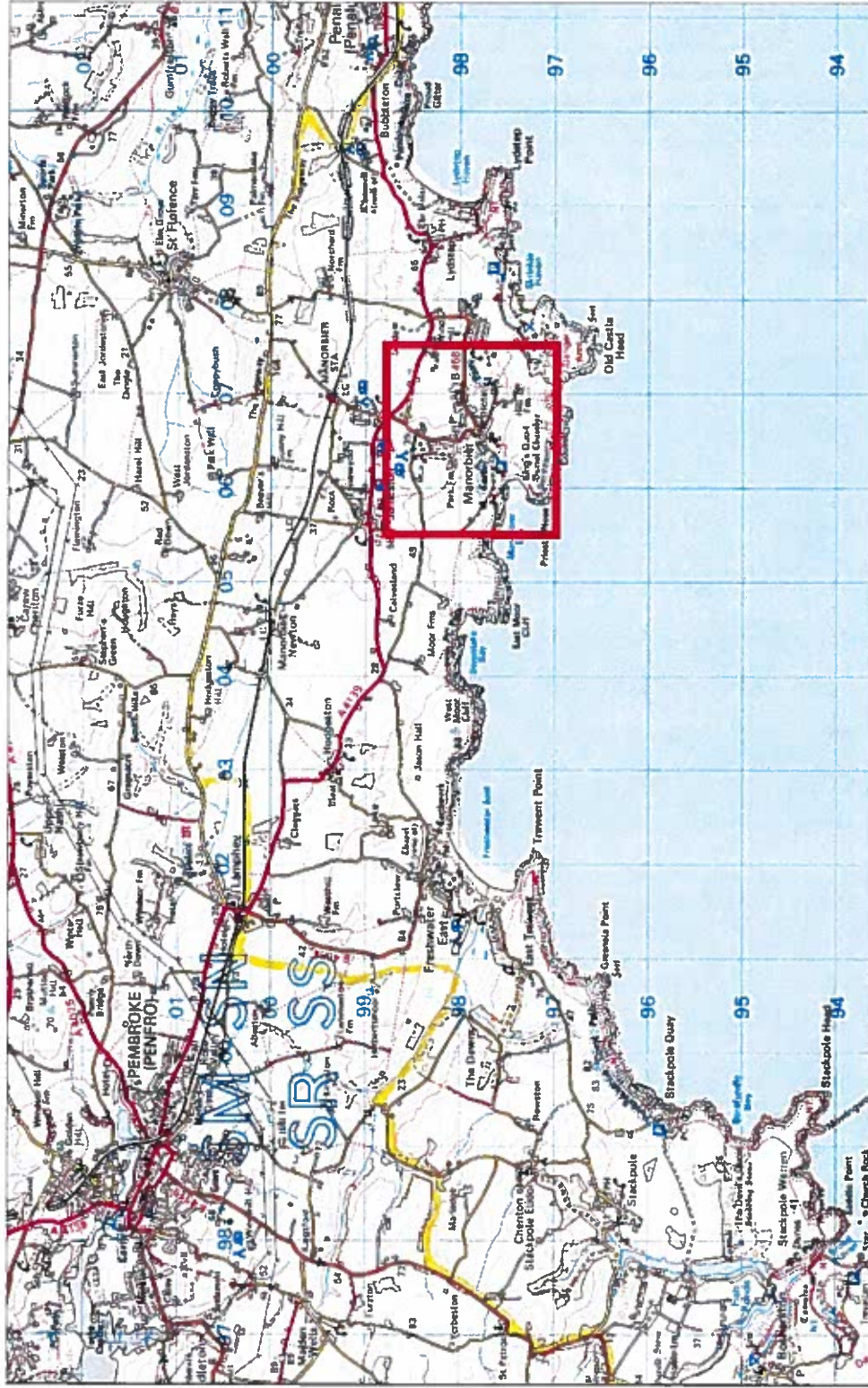


Figure 1: Location map of Manorbier based on Ordnance Survey.

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd., The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandello, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

THE HOARD

The hoard comprises 21 fragments of copper alloy, weighing a combined 1806g (excluding a missing ingot fragment). The hoard belongs to the Ewart Park tradition of the Late Bronze Age, dating to between 1000-800BC. The hoard is similar in composition to the Freshwater West, Pembrokeshire hoard and other recently reported hoards from Cornwall. Hoards from these south western and Atlantic facing areas tend to have a high frequency of plano-convex ingot fragments within them, jets as casting bi-products and exotic pieces of the Carp's Tongue tradition, circulating between France, southern England and south western Britain.

The hoard comprises:-

- 1 complete socketed axe of South Wales type;
- 1 complete ribbed socketed axe of Southern English ribbed/Welby type;
- 2 socketed axe fragments (1 blade end, 1 side fragment);
- 1 socketed gouge/chisel (2 conjoining fragments);
- 1 spatulate ended bar fragment;
- 1 small sword blade fragment;
- 1 circular fitting with circular central aperture (as yet not identified);
- 1 circular headed pin fragment;
- 3 casting jets; and
- 8 plano-convex ingot fragments (seven present, one lost by finder on site).

During the archaeological field investigation the finder undertook further metal detecting in the vicinity and recovered a few other items, one of which may also be of Bronze Age origin (see Figure 2).

Account of Discovery

The finder, Gavin Palmer, made the discovery while metal detecting in 2010 on land near Manorbier, Pembrokeshire. In discussions with Adam Gwilt and Mark Lodwick (National Museum Wales), Mr Palmer provided the following details of the discovery.

Group 3

Comprises 13 artefacts found at depth of 0.6m. The soil down onto the artefacts was compacted (which suggests they lay beneath the ploughsoil).

Artefacts: Southern English ribbed axe, sword blade, circular fitting, socketed gouge (2 fragments), pin head (found inside socket of gouge), 2 casting jets, 4 ingot fragments. The ingot fragments were found above the other artefacts.

Tentative interpretation: The *in-situ* hoard findspot.

Group 1

Comprises 4 artefacts found at a depth of approximately 0.50m below the surface (shallower than group 3) in loose soil (which may suggest they lay within the ploughsoil).

Artefacts: South Wales type axe, axe blade end, 2 ingot fragments.

Tentative interpretation: Dispersed and plough-dragged from original hoard location.

Group 2

Comprises 2 artefacts found at a depth of approximately 0.30m below surface (shallower than group 3) in loose soil (again suggests ploughsoil).

Artefacts: 1 casting jet, 1 ingot fragment.

Tentative interpretation: Dispersed and plough-dragged from original hoard location.

Single findspot

Spatulate ended bar fragment found at a depth of approximately 0.30m below surface (shallower than group 3) in loose soil (probable ploughsoil).

Tentative interpretation: Needs metallurgical analysis (it appears to be of copper and has different patination) – potentially it could be more modern and not associated with the hoard. Otherwise, dispersed and plough dragged from original hoard location.

Single findspot

Large ingot fragment (lost on site).

Found between groups 2 & 3, but perhaps a little further north.

Tentative interpretation: Dispersed and plough-dragged from original hoard location.

FIELD SURVEY

Archaeologists from Dyfed Archaeological Trust visited the site with the finder on 6th December 2010, to survey in the approximate locations of the discoveries, while these were still fresh in the memory of the finder. Based on this information, two test pits were hand dug in an attempt to locate any surviving evidence of a pit that may have contained the hoard, and to ascertain the character of the soil profile in which the discoveries were made. Due to the presence of a turnip crop in the field, the scope for excavation was restricted.

Test pit 1

Test pit 1 was located at the approximate location of the discovery of the group 1 discoveries, an area of possibly plough dragged material. The plough soil was found to be 0.22m thick. Below this was a subsoil layer of compact clay silt with stone inclusions. Bedrock was encountered 0.60m below the present ground surface. The finder reported that the group 1 finds were in loose soil (possible ploughsoil?) at a depth of approximately 0.50m.

Test pit 2

Test pit 2 was located in the vicinity of the group 3 discoveries, the site of the main hoard deposition. The finds were located approximately 0.60m below the ground surface in compact soil (probable subsoil).

The excavated soil profile comprised a 0.55m thick deposit with no clear horizon between the plough soil and sub-soil. The subsoil increased in compaction with depth. Beneath this layer was a 0-.25m thick deposit of stoney clay silt.

Results of the Test pits

The test pit results did not reveal evidence of any cut features that may have been associated with the hoard. There is a slight discrepancy between the finders recollection of the depths at which the discoveries were made and the soil profiles revealed by excavation. This may, however, be accounted for by localised variation in soil depths and uncertainty of the exact locations of the finds.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

A second visit was made on 21st February 2011 once the turnip crop had been harvested. On this occasion a geophysical survey was undertaken in the discovery area to try and identify the feature within which the hoard is assumed to have been deposited, or presence of other buried features, which might suggest that the hoard was part of a more complex site.

Geophysical survey results

The results of the geophysical survey are shown in Figure 2, and an annotated interpretation in Figure 3. The large curvilinear patterns visible in the image are most likely to be the result of variations in the underlying geology or soils, possibly accentuated in places by ploughing across the hill slope. One straight linear feature is most likely that of a modern field drain or service trench.

The survey does not suggest the presence of complex archaeological features or deposits. The survey does not indicate the presence of any other metallic objects that may indicate further elements of the hoard.

There are one or two dark anomalies in the vicinity of the test pits and hoard. Such anomalies are difficult to categorise with any degree of certainty, but it is possible they could represent pits that might have contained the hoard. Unfortunately it was not possible to undertake further excavation to confirm this possibility.

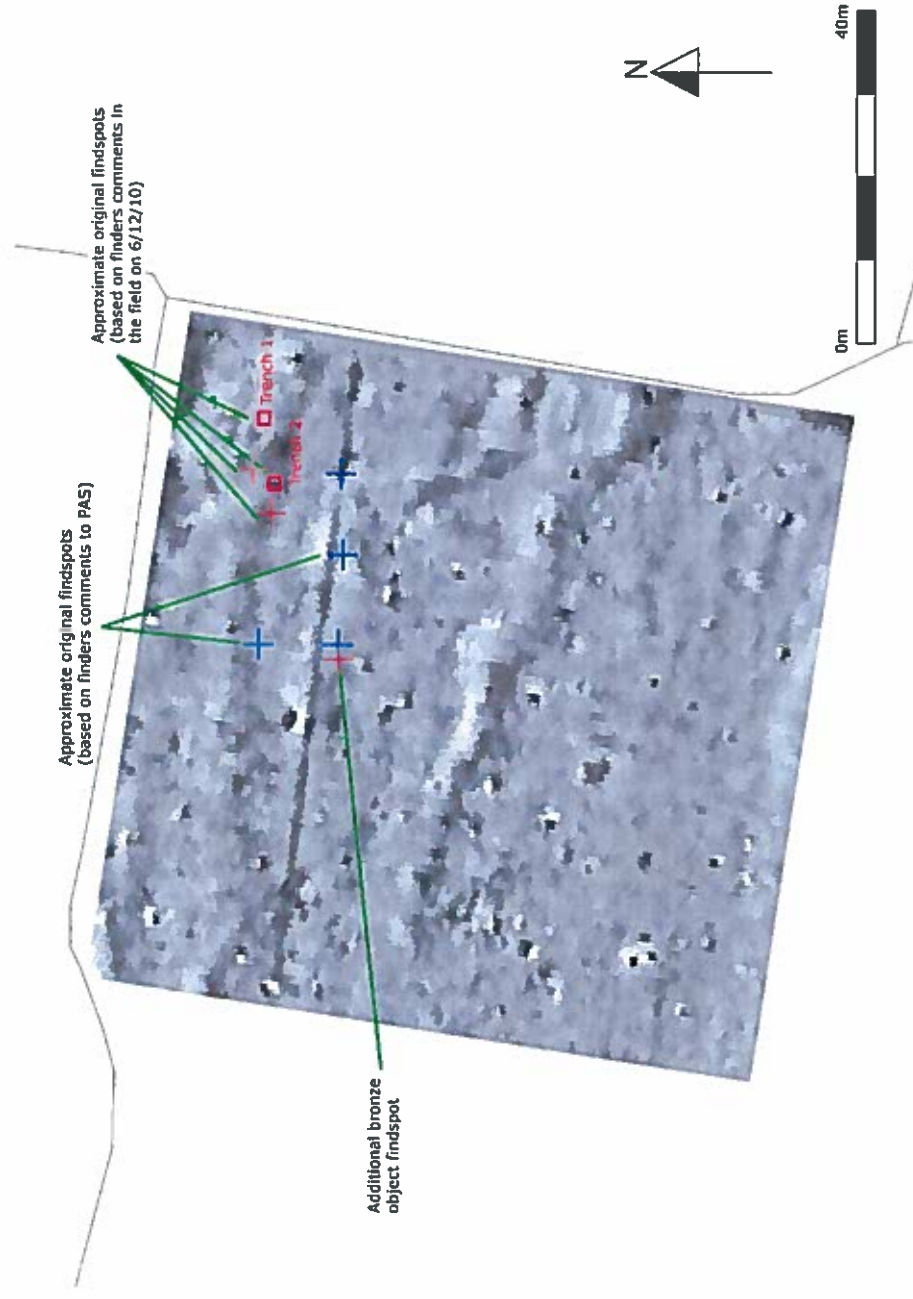


Figure 2: Geophysical Survey plot overlay with possible locations of find sites and test pit locations

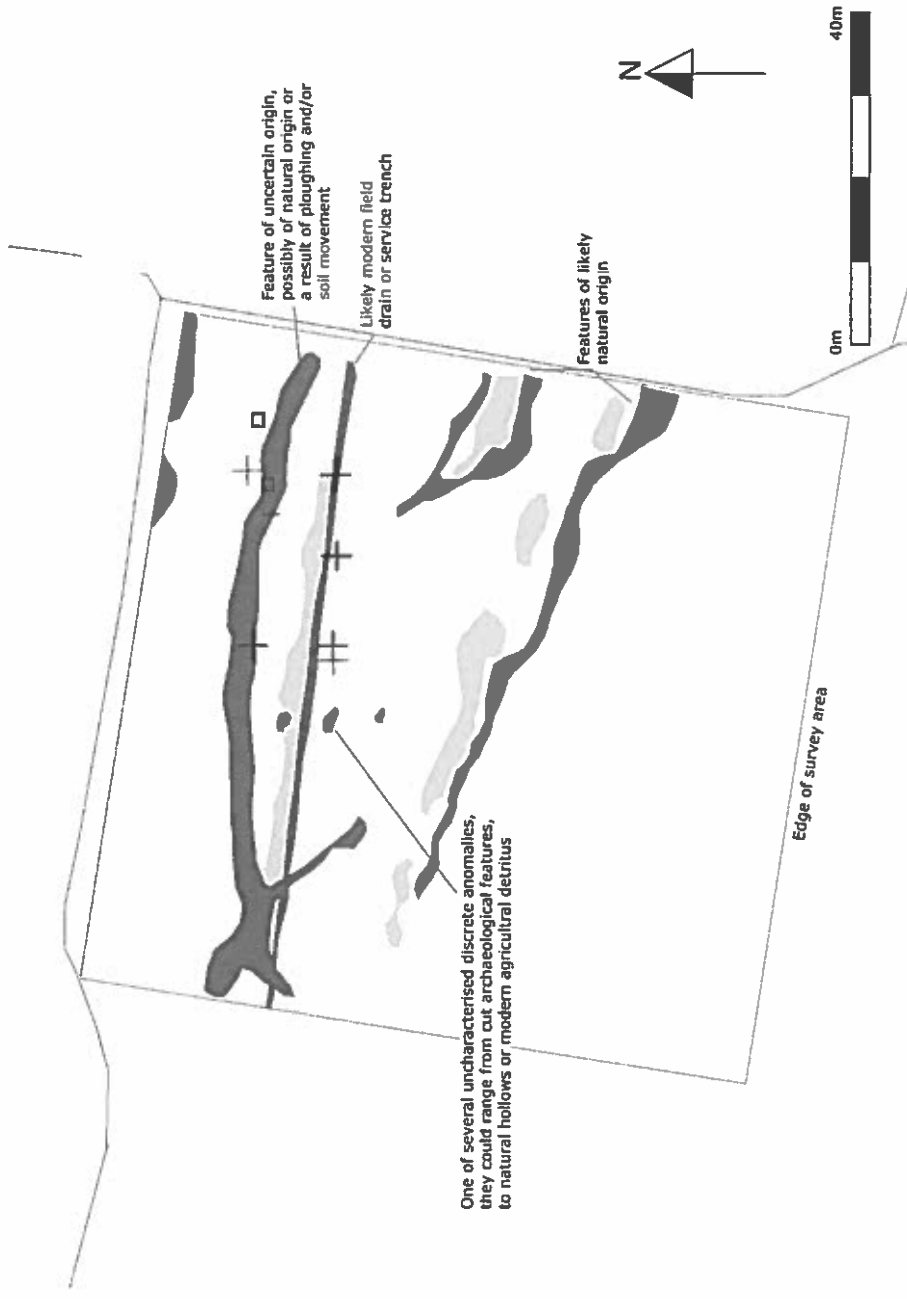


Figure 3: Annotated interpretation plan of the geophysical survey results, also showing locations of test pits and findspots

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the available evidence, it appears most likely that the finds represent a single isolated hoard. The hoard has recently been dispersed through ploughing activity, such that objects and groups of objects have been dragged away from the main hoard site. Aerial photographic coverage suggests that the east-west spread of the discovery locations is consistent with the ploughing axis along the northern edge of the field.

No evidence was identified during this work of more complex archaeological features in the vicinity. The hoard was presumably originally buried in a pit, but although the geophysical survey may indicate the presence of possible pits, no excavated evidence could be obtained, and potentially evidence for the pit has been destroyed by ploughing. It is not possible to ascertain any association between the potential pits recorded on the geophysical survey and the hoard.

There is no clear evidence to suggest that further excavation would provide significant additional information about the context of the hoard. This is further highlighted by the circumstances of the find suggest it has been dispersed by ploughing.

**A LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM MANORBIER,
PEMBROKESHIRE
(Treasure Case 10.12)**

**RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO 2011/17
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 100611**

Mawrth 2011
March 2011

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

Duncan Schlee

Swydd / Position: Project Manager

Llofnod / Signature  Date 31/03/2011

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

Duncan Schlee

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature  Date 31/03/2011

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report